

There are many obvious reasons why media consolidation is incompatible with broadcasting on the public airwaves in the public interest. The most recent demonstration of how consolidation serves corporate rather than public interest is Sinclair Broadcast's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary two weeks before the election, in the place of their regular programming. This move is obviously an attempt to alter the outcome of a tight election race, the resolution of which could impact the future legal status of Sinclair Broadcast's television hegemony.

Polarized election aside, national interests should not trump local media coverage. Sinclair's free use of public airwaves must, by law, serve public interest, and not the company's corporate agenda. Media ownership rules have become lax under the current administration, and while this situation benefits the mere handful of corporations which now own almost all American media, it is a detriment to the quality and

relevance of local news and the diversity and vitality of the communities that "local" channels are supposed to serve. This blatant example of national corporate interference with local interests only exacerbates a media situation which has already long been intolerable.

The anti-Kerry program Sinclair is requiring their stations to air will be shown during prime-time hours next week at the expense of regular programming time. The Sinclair station group collectively reaches 24% of U.S. television households. No corporation should have such a wide influence, especially when its interest is clearly private, rather than public. The free airwaves should be used to provide a public service, and that should be the sum total of the agenda, without corporate bias, politics, or profit dominating local news coverage. This is why media ownership rules should be strengthened, not further dissolved. Thank you.